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SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: SECOND PARLIAMENTARY RE-RUNS -- MORE
IRREGULARITIES, BUT NO VIOLENCE

REF: SKOPJE 394 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY.

¶1. (SBU) The June 29 second round of re-runs of the June 1 Parliamentary elections were again marked by instances of serious electoral irregularities (reftel). Although the security environment was improved compared to the June 1 elections, static monitoring by international observer teams did not stop blatant proxy voting in a number of polling stations. The results of the re-runs confirm 18 MP seats for DUI to DPA's 11. DUI is claiming a "landslide victory," while DPA and VMRO-DPMNE may try to use an appeal from minor party PDP in an effort to create a Badinter majority for a coalition that excludes DUI. End Summary.

Presence of Observers Did Not Stop Blatant Proxy Voting

¶2. (SBU) The June 29 second round of re-runs of June 1 Parliamentary elections, like the first round of re-runs on June 15, showed a greatly improved security environment. The administration of the voting was marked, however, by serious irregularities and intimidation in a number of polling stations. As with the June 15 re-runs, the security presence was considerable, with sizable police special forces teams patrolling in and around polling stations.

¶3. (SBU) Election observers from the Embassy and from the local NATO, EU, and OSCE missions monitored all 15 of the re-vote polling stations where June 15 balloting was invalidated because of fraud, intimidation and/or polling station closures. Static monitoring did not stop blatant proxy voting in many polling stations. In one case, a young man transported groups of voters to the polling station and clearly marked their ballots for them. In another case, a young male, clearly under the age of 18, changed his shirt each time between his many visits to the polling station to vote with someone else's identification card. The Electoral Board responded to an observer's question about the youth by quipping that "he was voting on behalf of the sick and the elderly." At one polling station, police arrested a man after he destroyed a number of ballots, angry that the strong observer presence hindered his ability to stuff ballots. The polling station was closed for several hours, but later re-opened.

¶4. (SBU) The bulk of the polling stations saw some procedural irregularities, including Electoral Boards not checking voters' identification, or not checking for or spraying ink on voters' thumbs. One international observer

also reported being shoved by a DPA supporter, and several monitors noted that voters had begun directing some of their irritation over the re-vote process toward the international community.

More Re-Runs? PDP May Carry DPA's (and VMRO-DPMNE's?) Water

15. (SBU) The State Electoral Commission (SEC) reported that the June 29 balloting confirms the June 15 results, with the Parliamentary seat distribution as follows: DUI 18, DPA 11, VMRO-DPMNE 63 and the opposition "Sonce" coalition 27. Parties have 48 hours to file appeals to the SEC. Neither DUI nor DPA are likely to appeal the results.

16. (SBU) DUI called the results a "landslide victory," while DPA said that earlier SEC and Supreme Court decisions had enabled DUI's "theft" of 60 thousand votes, but added that they were unlikely to file another round of appeals.

17. (SBU) Ethnic Albanian PDP (a minor party) has announced to the SEC its intention to appeal the results of the June 29 balloting. PDP leader Abduladi Vejseli said that his party is only 123 votes short of earning an MP seat, which would cost DUI one MP. If PDP's appeal is successful and a re-vote earns them a seat, that seat, together with DPA's 11 seats and the 6 ethnic minority-held seats in the current VMRO-DPMNE coalition, would allow for a Badinter majority. That would give VMRO-DPMNE the possibility to build a "Badinter capable" coalition without DUI as a coalition partner. Note: Monitors suspected that some VMRO-DPMNE

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supporters received instructions to vote for PDP, in an effort to decrease DUI's numbers and offer VMRO-DPMNE more flexibility in coalition negotiations. End note.

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